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THE STAR OF THE EAST

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an ecumenical journal dealing
specially with the oriental and
eastern orthodox churches.

P. O. Box 98, Kottayam – 686 001, Kerala, India.

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**An Ecumenical Journal dealing specially with
the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.**

**SOPHIA CENTRE, ORTHODOX SEMINARY, P. B. 98,
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Welcome, 1980, with Fear and Hope!

We are in the process of welcoming the year of the Lord 1980. As we enter the last two decades of our millennium, it is normal that we have, deep down in us, a curious mixture of foreboding and hope.

Foreboding because our world is seen to be grossly unjust, our humanity so inhumanly and wickedly greedy and rapacious, our nations armed to the teeth and ready for mutual self-destruction, our churches so hopelessly divided, our environment dangerously polluted, the fragile bubble of our biosphere so perilously near bursting-point, our governments so far removed both from reality and from any hunger and thirst for righteousness, and we ourselves each one of us Christians, curiously aware of our inadequacies and failures yet unable or unwilling to do anything about it.

Hope, because we still believe in Christ, the Lord of Hope. When things get very dark, the dawn may be near. When it is night, we do not see the Lord standing by the sea-shore. And yet we know, deep down inside us, that He is there, that the dawn will come, that He may come to chide us because "we have toiled all night and caught nothing;" that He may then lead us to a different side of the sea and to a miraculous catch; that He may himself invite us to breakfast, and give us the blessed bread and fish.

Both are realities. The world is dangerously near a Third World War, and the same interests that oppress and exploit us are also the ones who can plunge us into the dense darkness of a nuclear holocaust which is the light of the devil. The Lord may come in that very blinding explosion of light and heat, and the new age become fully manifest.

Equally possible that He may tarry. Only to give us time to repent and return to Him. To seek His love and forgiveness, ourselves to love and forgive all others, all of us Christians united in the search for peace and righteousness, justice and dignity for all. The faith of many have already waxed cold; but there are many others fairly warm of faith but somewhat feeble in hope, waiting for some community to lead the way in setting a pattern for a society where righteousness and holiness dwell together. That also would be Christ's coming.

May Christ come, manifestly, or through new communities of the new humanity. May He be born in each of us and in our common life. May the spirit of God weld us together in Christ, that we may ourselves become the Light of the World and the Salt of The Earth. May God's grace and mercy be with you this Christmas and as you move into the coming New Year. Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus!

Christmas Message 1979

by Dr. Philip A. Potter

General Secretary, World Council of Churches

The coming of Christ nearly two thousand years ago was heralded as the arrival of the "reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1: 23). The wise kings coming from afar enquired: "Where is he who is born King of the Jews?"

During the past centuries there has been no lack of utopias and promises of a king. This symbol of the king envisages the individual or corporate expression in every society of order over chaos, of justice over oppression, of peace over war, of unity over divisions that destroy, of healing and wholeness over sickness and fragmentary human existence, of the victory of the forces of light over the powers of darkness. At no time in history as now has there been such a heightened consciousness of what realm is appropriate for true human and created life in community. At no time in history as now have there been such massive means and extraordinary possibilities for achieving this ideal of the king. And yet, as we move into the last decades of the second millenium of the Christian era, the gap between the ideal and reality is greater than ever.

The year which is ending has seen several tyrannies put down by the people enraged by brutal denial of their struggle to realise true kingship. That rage has been all the greater when powers which cherish this ideal, in their selfishness and fear, have upheld such tyrannies. The doctrine of national security has been invoked to mask military oppression, imprisonment, torture, media and psychiatric manipulation, to discredit, maim and destroy those who give voice to this ideal with their lives. Tyranny in our time has become the instrument of genocide. And yet, the 1970s have seen a surge of awareness of the ideal of the king by people everywhere and the determination of a few to be living, sacrificial embodiments of it.

For Christians the ideal of the king became a reality in the birth of Christ. The word of God the King was, as the Psalmists sang, that he reigns in the saving power of righteousness, justice, steady love and peace. This word became flesh in the Babe of Bethlehem. Divine majesty was manifested in human weakness. The Maker and Sustainer of the universe became the obscure village carpenter in a colony of the vaunting Roman Empire. His kingly rule was like seed growing secretly, like leaven in the dough, like wheat among

the weeds, like hidden treasure—unseen, unheard, unknown, but active, effective and promising for those who had eyes to see, ears to hear and the will to work and find. He came in our midst proclaiming: “The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the Gospel.” And this he did by making visible what defines the calling of the King, as the Psalmist declared:

He delivers the needy when he calls,
the poor and him who has no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy
and saves the lives of the needy.
From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.
(Ps. 72: 12—14)

So precious is the blood, the life of the needy that he gave his own blood to unite them, as well as those who deprive them, to the almighty love of God and to break the power of sinful rebellion against God’s will and purpose. Him God raised from the dead and gave us the endless life of the Kingdom until he comes again to manifest in its fulness his eternal reign.

Jesus our King taught us to pray: “Your Kingdom come”. And this means sharing the bread of God’s creation; being forgiven and forgiving that we may be united together in the kingly life of justice, love and peace; and being delivered from the forces of evil which deny this life. But His prayer is a command that we all become a kingdom of priests, sacrificially mediating God’s sovereignty of good over all creation.

As we worship the new-born King this Christmastide and herald the perilous 1980s, may we receive, pray for and proclaim the Kingdom of God in life and act, knowing that “the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace and joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14: 17).

“Thy Kingdom Come”! As an Orthodox Sees it.

(Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios)

The theme of the next world conference of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, “YOUR KINGDOM COME”, is now studied at depth in all the six continents of the world and in many islands. The study will not end in Melbourn in May of next year, but will continue till the end of history as it is the prayer taught by Our Lord as the end or purpose of the Incarnation, of the Church and even of historical existence. No greater prayer than this has been ever uttered by the lips of man. “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven is just an elucidation of the central prayer, ‘Your Kingdom Come!’”. No greater motto has ever been discovered by any social or religious worker anywhere under the sky. The watchword, ‘Evangelization of the world in this generation’ with which John R. Mott, Robert E. Speer and Sherwood Eddy enthused the students and Christians of the last century is a smaller aim included in the ultimate prayer ‘Thy Kingdom Come!’ Let us examine the profundity of the prayer ‘Your Kingdom Come,’ by examining it first negatively and then positively.

A. Inadequate understanding of the prayer, ‘Your Kingdom Come’.

Most of the existing interpretations of this prayer are not only partial and inadequate, but also cancel each other. A wholistic understanding must include these partial elements, but will be much more than the sum total of the present definitions. There are those who say that the kingdom of God is individual salvation on the basis of the verse, ‘The Kingdom of God is within you’ or ‘repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!’ On the other hand there are those who equate the Kingdom of God to a better economic, social, cultural, religious society without exploitation of man by man. They can give that interpretation because a kingdom is always social and not personal. Similarly, the partial understanding goes to one of the two extremes either time or eternity, either consummation of history or anti-thetical to history, either human achievement or divine gift, either visible or invisible, humanization or divinization, secularisation or Christification, ecclesial or cosmic, ascent or descent, either related to the Holy Spirit in the Church or to the Second Coming of Christ. The students of the Bible will be able to quote a proof text for any of these standpoints, but the total Tradition would

not support any one of such extreme positions, as the perfect or final understanding of the Kingdom. There are questions that can be asked to those who identify the Kingdom with the Church and also to those who distinguish the two by saying that the Church is the foretaste or first-fruit of the Kingdom. In the parables of the Kingdom in St. Mathew 13, the kingdom is not the wheat alone, nor the weeds, but the field in which both are allowed to grow till the harvest time. This analogy is applicable to the Church also. The analogy of the Church as the Bride of Christ would not make her just a foretaste of the Kingdom, but the everlasting bride. The ambiguity of historical existence affects the Church as a historical entity as well as the kingdom of God in history. Both have a perfection which is eschatological.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF MISSIONS (IRM) No: 270 dealing with the theme 'Your Kingdom Come' has many profound insights about the concept of the Kingdom. The working document produced by the Orthodox Reflection Group Meeting in Paris last September is good as far as it goes, but it does not go to the Trinitarian foundation, from which alone the prayer can be understood. The quotations taken from Colbert S. Cartwright, Gerhard Ebeling and Karl Barth are having differing emphases, all of them worthy of study, though one-sided. The first one shows its futuristic hope dimension, the second the present aspect of the Kingdom and the third its divine intervention aspect. A wholistic view of the Kingdom would include all these and much more. It is impossible to conceive the Kingdom of God without a paradoxical unity of the bi-polar elements of human and divine, time and eternity, singularity and plurality, fallibility and infallibility, tares and wheat as long as we view it from the historical angle. The paradox will be removed when time and space are replaced by eternity and infinity, when we see Him face to face in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

B. What then is the Kingdom of God?

(i) The Holy Trinity is the Eternal King and the Kingdom, the Eternal Father and His eternal Family, eternal Love in eternal action. Hence in Him there is singularity and plurality united in the ontological bond of love which eternally creates equality inspire the distinctions within Himself. It is only in the Blessed Trinity that we have the Absolute and Model Kingdom, for the coming of which we pray daily. When Christ the King brought Heaven on earth by the kenotic and cosmic dimensions of the Incarnation, He chose the college of the Apostles, all of whom were equal and distinct as in the Holy Trinity, with St. Peter as first among equals. The Unity of the Church for which Christ prayed (St. Jn. 17: 21) is for a unity on the Trinitarian Model: "that they may all be one; even as Thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be in us; so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me". The Kingdom of God is the

perfection of love which always cares for each as if each matters most and for all as if all matter most. There was not a time when God was King without a Kingdom as He is in Himself the King and the Kingdom. Individualization by participation (Tillich), which is the meaning of personality. God would not be person if He were a lonely Monad as Personality is impossible without participation. The Descent of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost also created an egalitarian society where there was not a single needy person and goods were held in common "and distributed to all as any had need". The Kingdom is where the King is and where he rules according to his will and purpose, nature and energy to conform the subjects to His Family. Earthly kingdoms are maintaining the distinction between the King and his subjects, but the Heavenly Kingdom of God unites the subjects to the Family of God. "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn. 3: 2f). The Holy Trinity is not an abstract doctrine with no practical application in Christian life, but the perfection to which we are asked to grow (Mt. 5: 48). The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct and yet co-equal, co-eternal and co-essential. Similarly the Kingdom of God in history must aim at creating a classless society with equality of opportunity for all, inspite of the differences in colour or sex or race. The world will believe that Christ is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity if His followers would practise a deep *koinonia* with sharing of everything material and spiritual. Circumincision (*perichoresis*) stands for this sharing between the Persons in the work of Creation, Redemption and Consumation, though the Father alone is Father, Son alone is Son generated and Spirit alone Spirit proceeding.

(ii) The sermon on the Mount is the ethic of the Kingdom of God. All the eight beatitudes take the Incarnate Christ as the model citizen of the Kingdom. Every Christian is to be self-denying and self-giving as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He has to go beyond the Law and the Prophets and be pure in thought, forgiving in spirit, and loving the friend and the enemy equally. His good deeds, prayer and fasting are not to be seen of men but in secret as the secret of religion is religion in secret. He prays for the coming of the Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven, when provision, pardon, protection and preservation from the Evil One will be the lot of all. He does not worry about his material needs; neither does he want to accumulate wealth, but gives priority to the Kingdom, knowing well that the Heavenly Father will supply all his needs. He does not judge who will go to heaven and who will go to hell, because the Judge of all the earth shall judge rightly in the fullness of time. "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven." The Kingdom of God, then is a proletarian style of life,

and not a bourgeois style. Each citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom is bound by the commandment, "Love God perfectly and your neighbour as you love yourself." Therefore, he does not build a huge house for his only child when his neighbour with a number of children is living in a dilapidated hut, which he is not able to thatch. He enjoys when he is able to help others and feels sorry that he has to depend on others for his own needs. Like St. Paul, he works hard to feed others. Selfishness and the Kingdom of God are anti-thetical, for the motto of the child of the Kingdom is, 'not my will, but Thine be done'. The Kingdom of man is the reign of man according to the will of the self, but the Kingdom of God is the reign of God according to the will of God. The will of God is that the whole world and the fullness thereof that belongs to Him by virtue of creation by Him, must be enjoyed by all His children and not by just a few, whatever by the means.

(iii) The coming of the kingdom is gradual because the Holy Spirit is already at work, anti-thetical as sin and devil are at work in history, but ultimately apocalyptic as the Parousia is the end of history when the New Heaven and the New Earth will replace the old heaven and the old earth, by descent from above. The mark of the Heavenly Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, is the dwelling of God with men, when he will wipe away every tear. "Death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21: 1—4). Any Utopia on earth by scientific advance or parliamentary democracy or the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the kingdom of God in its perfection, but only the partial coming of the kingdom on earth. The old humanity of Adam and the new humanity of Christ will continue till the end of history and the whole creation will continue its groaning and travailing till it obtains the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8: 18—28). The ultimacy of the Kingdom of God is not *aham brahmasmi* (I am Brahma) of Advaita, stressing the identity of *Jivatman* with *paramatman* (man with God), nor the polytheism of popular Hinduism, nor the this worldliness of many Christians, but growing to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ in history and eternity.

Scripture and Tradition

Rev. Fr. T. J. Joshua

The relation between Scripture and Tradition is a subject of great importance in ecumenical discussions. This is all the more true in a dialogue between Churches of Western and Eastern traditions. To the Protestant Churches Scripture alone is the final authority and source of God's revelation. Tradition in their view, is redundant; it is something to be kept in archives. There are other Churches (eg. the Roman Catholics) for whom Scripture and Tradition have till recently been two equally important sources of revelation. How do the Orthodox Churches understand the relation between Scripture and Tradition? The aim of this paper is to make a brief answer to the above question.

What Is Tradition ? The word tradition is derived from the Greek word '*Paradosis*' which in the New Testament always means that which is handed on. During the time of the Apostles Tradition was the basis of Christian teaching and the only source of faith. St. Paul reminds his readers "to keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the *tradition* that you have received from us" (2Thess. 3: 6). To the Corinthians Paul asks "to maintain the tradition even as I have delivered them to you" (1 Cor. 11: 2). His reference in 1 Cor. 11: 23 is particularly illuminating. St. Paul says "I received *from the Lord* what I also delivered to you". The words which I also received from the Lord" implies a formulae of passing on, something received. When Paul says that he received something "*from the Lord*" he means that he received it by mediation through the Church.

Thus we find that the most ancient and original means for transmission of divine revelation was Holy Tradition. The Apostles were not enthusiastic about writing books. They showed more interest in delivering the message by word of mouth. "Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink, but I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face so that our joy may be complete" writes the author of 2nd John (See 3 Jn. 13). The interest of the early Church in the oral tradition remained strong. Papias, for example says that "if ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I enquired of them what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples had said".¹

1. Quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

Soon the oral tradition was supplemented by the written tradition. With the appearance of written records of the Apostles' teaching, the oral tradition ceases to be the only source of faith. But between the two traditions there was no sense of discord. It is vain to look for any suggestion that one possesses greater measure of inspiration or validity than the other. St. Paul reaffirms that the Church has written the unwritten tradition. "Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught either by word or by our epistles" (2 Thess. 2: 15).

The disciplines of form-criticism and Redaction Criticism pursued by modern Biblical Scholars have revealed that the Gospels and other books of the New Testament were formed out of the living tradition of the Church. The worshipping community and the living fellowship therein was the milieu in which the books of the Bible took shape.

Tradition in the Post-Apostolic period:

After the time of the Apostles, the Church had to encounter difficulties, when heretical teachers appeared. The heretics used Scripture, rather exploited it for their own ends. Thus it became necessary to appeal to the living traditions preserved in the Church through Apostolic succession. This is generally reflected in the writings of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Irenaeus believed that the Church preserved the tradition inherited from the Apostles and passed it on to her children. In contrast with the secret traditions of the heretics (Gnostics) Irenaeus maintained that the living traditions in the Church had Apostolic authority. The authority and validity of the tradition is guaranteed by the unbroken succession of bishops and by the work of the Holy Spirit. The whole point of his teaching was, in fact, that Scripture and the Churches unwritten tradition were identical in content, both being vehicles of the revelation. Tertullian's attitude does not differ from Irenaeus in any important respect.

Tradition in the Church falls into two categories:

(i) *The Apostolic tradition*, which coincides with the preaching of the Apostles and their teaching. This is developed on general lines in the books of the New Testament and bears the final form of the Canon. But it is not exhaustively recorded in the New Testament

(ii) *The Holy Tradition of the Church* in the general sense, i. e. the whole tradition of faith and practice. Bishop Papadapoulos of the Greek Orthodox Church defines this as "the continuously evolving interpretation and development of the original Apostolic teaching by the Church as a living organism and the formulation of the Canons governing the Church's life".....²

2. The Orthodox Ethos – Page, 202 Article: "The Revelatory Character of the N. T. and Holy Traditions in the Orthodox Church".

For the Orthodox, Tradition is the transmission of the whole life of the Church. It is not static, but a dynamic movement of God in history. The Church is a living organism and it is rejuvenated by the living presence of Christ in it. Tradition is the expression of the permanent presence of God in the Community of Israel. As John Meyendorff put it "Tradition is the self identity of the Church through the ages and is the organic and visible expression of the life of the Spirit in the Church".³ From what we had said above, it is clear that the Orthodox Church looks upon Tradition not as a "petrified mummy" but as a living reality in the fellowship of the Church.

Place of Scripture: We have already noted that the Scripture took shape from the living tradition. It is a unique source of revelation and has the highest honour of place. Its important message is the salvation of mankind in Jesus Christ. The light emanating from the incarnate Lord illuminates both the Old and New Testament records, so that we can speak of the writers of the Bible as truly God-inspired. Without the Bible we cannot today begin to discuss the Christian revelation. The fathers of the Church who are the guardians of Holy Tradition have extolled the fact that Scripture is inspired by God. Their endeavour was to interpret the Scripture, to develop doctrine based on spiritual truths and to order the life of the Church in accordance with them. The whole life of the Church—its worship, sermons, hymns, liturgies—is impregnated with Holy Scripture. There is no sacrament without reading from the Scripture. The prayers and hymns pulsate with Scriptural ideas and phrases. Before the reading of the Bible, a prayer is said, beseeching God to strengthen and illuminate all, that they may understand the truth contained in the Bible. The Church has placed the Gospel on its holy table and uses it in its liturgies.

Scripture is not only the source of knowledge and of inspiration, but also the mirror, the criterion, the touch-stone of spiritual life and of the faith and of the traditions of the Church. All which is incompatible with the Spirit and tenour of Scripture, cannot be the manifestation of the Spirit of God living in the Church. The Scripture is the authentic fixation of the words of our Lord and His Apostles. So it becomes the criterion for judgement of the Church.

Unity of Scripture and Tradition

Scripture and Tradition are not two separate sources for our knowledge of Truth. Scripture is the first and unique record of Tradition. It is the primary written witness to the Tradition, and was produced by the Tradition. Scripture could be spoken of as the primary deposit of Tradition. Scripture is unique within Tradition, because it is the primary, first-hand Apostolic witness to the Person, Work and Teaching of the Incarnate Christ.

3. Living Traditions – New York, 1978. P. 21.

Tradition is only partly written. It is also transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation. But among written Traditions, Scripture holds a primary and unique place. What is written down in the Scriptures is specially God-inspired, but the whole of Tradition is God-inspired.

So we have the distinction first between written tradition and unwritten tradition. The unwritten tradition is the more comprehensive whole. From it the Apostles, Evangelists, and Fathers have written certain things down. As St. Basil the Great says in his Treatise on the Holy Spirit, "among the doctrines and teachings preserved in the Church, we hold some from written sources and we have collected others transmitted in an unexplicit from Apostolic tradition. They have all the same value For it we were to try to put aside the unwritten customs as having no great force, we should, unknown to ourselves, be weakening the Gospel in its very essence, furthermore we should be transforming the Kerygma into mere word".

The Tradition cannot be exhaustively written down. What is written down is only part of it. In the Catholic and Apostolic Church the living tradition is maintained in continuity from generation to generation.

Tradition is the mind of the Church. No human being can write down everything that he or she knows. Similarly the mind of the Church knows many things without having to write them down. The Spirit of God worked through the Apostles and Evangelists to write down part of that Tradition, and the Church gathered these together, chose the authentic ones, and by fixing the Canon of the New Testament, excluded many writings as inauthentic or unapostolic.

Scripture and Tradition are not two. They together form one source. Scripture is an integral part of Tradition, and has a unique role within it.

If tradition is not judged and guarded by Scripture the result will be many accretious and superstitions in the Church. Any tradition which contradicts the spirit of the Scripture is false. Holy Scripture remains the standard to which Holy Tradition must constantly be referred. So also Scripture must be preserved and its interpretation guarded by the Holy Tradition. Tradition is the vigilant guardian and infallible interpreter of the letter of Scripture. The great importance of Holy Tradition and the respect shown for it, are due to the fact that it has preserved and will continue to preserve the whole apostolic teaching. Only through the Holy Tradition does the Christian faith remain intact throughout the ages.

Conclusion

1. In the Orthodox understanding there is no contrast between Scripture and Tradition; but there is an intrinsic unity of Tradition within which Scripture has a unique and honoured place.

2. Scripture and Tradition are not two separate sources of Revelation. They are one Source, but two expressions. Scripture and Tradition form one sacred deposit of the Word of God which is committed to the Church.

3. As Tradition is essential to the right understanding and interpretation of the Holy Scripture, so is Holy Scripture essential as a proper criterion for judging the value and place of any specific tradition. No Christian Community, however can live without Tradition – right tradition or wrong tradition, or a mixture of the two.

Authority in the Church*

PAUL GREGORIOS

Authority is a word very much out of fashion in this age of democratic liberty. It is suspect in both its forms—accepting some statement or conclusion on the authority of others, or submitting oneself to obedience and control by other wills. We should keep this distinction between external authority for making statements—or intellectual authority on the one hand and on the other, authority as control of one will by another will and submission to someone else's decisions—Volitional authority.

Existentialism was a movement in revolt against both forms of authority, making my subjective determination the final arbiter of truth and moral good. Today existentialism as pure subjectivity and pure freedom is not so much in fashion, even in France, though Indian students and literatures still cling to some halfbaked forms of existentialism.

Authority—General Comments.

Few of us are conscious of the fact that we do all of us in fact live under various forms of authority. None of us has found out everything for himself without depending on the authority of others, nor do any of us make our moral decisions in pure individual freedom irrespective of what others expect from us. That kind of freedom from authority is a chimaera, a non-entity. Neither science nor religion can function without authority. No single scientist can start from scratch and “prove” everything for himself. He accepts the authority of the scientific community for most of his knowledge. Scientific knowledge, in so far as it is cumulative and continuously growing, has to be based on the authority of the work of several individuals and groups living now as well as in the past. There is no science without Tradition and Authority.

There we are talking of intellectual authority. Our lives are fully under the influence of volitional authority also. Our culture conditions us to will certain things in a certain way. If everybody eats three full meals a day I do the same. And some things are *imposed* upon us by authority. We *have* to go to school; we *have* to pay taxes, directly or indirectly. We *have* to obey the laws of the State.

*Paper presented at a Lutheran-Orthodox Conversation, Coonoor, June 1979.

In other words there can neither be knowledge or common life without some form of authority – however much radical westerners may talk about freedom from authority and *autogestion*, the new French word for “not being managed” by someone else.

Authority in the Church

Things are no different in the Church, which is a community with its own mind and its own way of relating within itself and with others. It too has both intellectual authority and volitional authority. How that authority is structured is what we need to examine afresh here.

The Church does not live either by the Bible *alone* or by the *whole* Bible for its intellectual or volitional authority. The Bible is one element among several others, though it has its specific and unique place in the life of the Church. But its place is in the Church – not above it. Where it is accepted and understood it has authority; otherwise it does not stand by itself outside the Church and Command.

In order to understand the place of Biblical authority in the Church, one has first to clarify the notion of Church. If by Church we mean an assembly of believers or a denomination, then it is quite different from conceiving the Church as the whole Body of Christ, all those who have been incorporated into His Person from Adam to Parousia, which is a single reality pervading the whole of time-space, the whole human race and the whole of its history.

Like the Tradition of the Scientific Community, the Tradition of the Church has its own specificity, its own cumulative continuity, its own exhort of behaviour and understanding its own “conjectures and refutations” to use a Popperian phrase. The Tradition of the Church is also cumulative – aspects of its continually subject to revision, other aspects remaining fairly unchanged, as in science. The integrity of the Tradition does not mean complete uniformity or unanimity in either the community of Science or the Community of Faith.

But we must not stretch the analogy of Tradition in the Church and in the Scientific Community too far. The Scientific community has nothing parallel to the Bible as its uniquely authoritative document. The place of Bible is thus a key to understanding the specificity of authority in the Church; for neither intellectually nor volitionally is the scientific community subject to its authority.

The Nature of Biblical Authority in the Church

Outside the Church the Bible has its own intrinsic authority – as literature, as source of inspiration, as historical material. But it is not in these senses alone that the Church regards the Bible,

Neither is the Bible regarded by other communities which revere it, in the same way as the Church. The same Old Testament can be seen in at least three different ways by communities which accept its 'authority' – Jewish, Christian and Muslim, not to speak at the moment of differences within each of these communities.

The Church has an understanding of the Bible centred around the Event, Person and Work of the Son of God Incarnate, which means also the work of the Father and the Holy Spirit whose will and work are always co-ordinated with those of Jesus the Christ. This understanding is not so much evolved out of the Bible; it would be more proper to say that such an understanding, in various degrees of perfection or clarity, informed the very writing of the New Testament, an activity that occurred in the Church during its whole infancy and not at or before its birth at Pentecost.

The New Testament is a product of the Church – i.e. the Body of Christ composed of Christ and sinful human beings united by the Holy Spirit. The New Testament bears the marks of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as well as of the frailty and fallibility of the Human Spirit, as also does the Church.

But the Bible is never "above the Church". Above the Church is its Head, even Jesus Christ, who in turn, in the Holy Spirit, subjects himself to the Father. The Father, the Son and the Spirit – the one God, constitutes authority over the Church – not the Bible.

The Authority of God.

Authority is a strange word – in fact it means what is regarded as its opposite – namely freedom, *Auctoritas* in Latin, *toqeph* in Hebrew, *exousia* or *epitage*, in Greek, means primarily the ability to be a subject and not an object, to act, not to be acted upon, to make things and people obey you, to achieve something, to have power, skill and ability within oneself, to be acting out of one's own free motion and not by compulsion.

As St. Paul says in Romans 13:1 *ou gar estin exousia ei me hypo theou*, there is no authority unless it is under God. God is the source-spring of all authority. And his authority is his freedom – to be what he wills to be. He wills what he is and is what he wills. His will becomes reality. And that is both true freedom and true authority. But we misunderstand that authority if we see it in terms of purely arbitrary dictatorship. The good, or love, defines his will, and his will is the norm for the good. No earthly dictator can honestly claim that, though many have made that claim.

Yet the authority of God is not the kind that always uses compulsion and command. In so far as man is made in the image of God, he too has his own proper freedom and authority which God

respects: That is the source of the dignity of man – this respect of God for the freedom he has bestowed on man.

Yes, there are moments when God treats people like children, forcing them against their will, as any loving mother will do to her children when she regards it necessary for their own Good. But ultimately they must grow up and make their own decisions. This is so even in the case of authority in the Church. All Church rules, church dogmas are for immature Christians, which most of us unfortunately are. All these are temporary – both the theology and the ethics. It is God's will that we should be free – that we should be good, and that the good should come out of us as a natural outflow (the good tree brings forth good fruits). It is not God's will that human beings should remain obedient slaves, subject to commands and authority; but that they should be grown-up sons, and daughters, exercising authority.

However the problem arises from the two facts:

(a) authority is not to be exercised by individuals as individuals, but rather in a corporate community; and (b) most individuals have not grown up to mature manhood in sufficient degree as to exercise authority responsibly.

So long as this situation lasts some structures of authority are necessary for the Church to be constituted and functioning as the Church. We see this not only in the Church but also in any organized society. The State is the most obvious example of authority and its mis-use. So is the family; unfortunately the Church too is always guilty of the mis-use of authority.

The mis-use of authority does not however mean that authority is bad in itself. What we have to do is a) to find sufficient checks and balances to prevent mis-use of authority; and b) frequently to make people conscious of the fact that authority is a means to freedom and for the functioning of the organism for its proper purposes – not an end in itself.

The Purpose of Authority in the Church.

Authority in the Church is to be exercised in order that the Church can function as Church. And what is the Church's function but the Worship of God and the Mission to the World? Authority is to be exercised in order that the Church may be truly edified, built up, in Christ by the Holy Spirit, that it may be enabled by the gifts of the Spirit to fulfill its royal priesthood, as priest of the Nations before God and as Servant of God before the nations.

Authority is for *oikodome*, for worship and mission. It is not an end in itself. Its purpose is not merely regulatory but also enabling. That is to say, authority does not merely command; it

enables the Church to be built up properly, to fulfil the Church's task of worshipping the Creator as Creation's High Priest and of manifesting the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to the whole creation, through a life of loving service, and of Spirit-powered witness.

The Spirit provides the following major forms of authority in the Church for this purpose:

- (a) the authority of governance and pastoral care
- (b) the authority for teaching and proclamation of the gospel
- (c) the authority for administering the sacramental mysteries of the Church.

All these three are oriented to *oikodome*-building up of the Body of Christ in the Spirit. All members of the Church have their own God-given role in all the three forms of authority, and participate in them not as passive recipients, but also as active exercisers of authority. This is what it means for every baptized member of the Body of Christ to share in Christ's person as High Priest and Good Shepherd.

But even the Body of Christ is not an end in itself. She becomes built up in the Spirit for worship and mission. She worships on behalf of the nations and on behalf of the whole of creation; she exercises her mission on behalf of God who has commissioned her to serve in the world. When this wider horizon of the Church's existence becomes forgotten or obscured through indifference and lack of love, authority in the Church becomes prone to mis-use.

Checks and Balances.

1. The living tradition is the life of the Church; i. e. the Holy Spirit operating in the community of Faith and forming its mind and body.

2. The heavenly mysteries of Baptism-Chrismation and Eucharist are constitutive of the Church, along with her being called and built up by the life-giving Spirit through the life-giving Word of God.

3. The ordained ministry in the Church is a participation in the Ministry of Christ. This means the whole Church participates in Christ's priesthood and mission – i. e. in Christ's authority.

4. The Canon of the Holy Scriptures has been established by the Church, and the Scriptures have to be continually taught and interpreted in the Church in order that she may be built up. The teaching ministry of the Church is guided and controlled by the primary witness to the Apostolic Tradition – namely the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures provide both criteria and content for the teaching ministry.

5. Knowledge of the living Tradition has a dialectic relation to the teaching of the Scripture. Scripture informs and regulates Tradition. Tradition illuminates and communicates the Scripture. Nowhere, in no Church or Community, whether Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox does the Scripture exist as a living reality without a living tradition of its interpretation and communication. Tradition formed the Scripture, and Scripture informs the Tradition. But these are not really two sources; rather one inter-dependent reality.

6. The specially ordained Ministry in the Church exists to fulfil certain roles in the life and ministry of the Church as a whole. Its main task is four-fold, i. e. teaching, proclamation through word and deed, pastoral care and the sacramental mysteries – all four for the sake of worship and mission.

7. The living tradition is regulated by three elements:

- (a) teaching
- (b) sacramental acts
- (c) discipline.

Each element has to be exercised in freedom, but there are written checks and balances like (i) Scripture, (ii) the writings of the great teachers and spiritual leaders in the Church's past, (iii) the decisions of the Councils and (iv) the liturgical texts themselves. For the sacramental acts, we have both a liturgical corpus of forms of sacramental liturgies and a living tradition which is changing. For discipline also we have a flexible authority despite the existence of certain penitential laws (how long one should do penance for a particular sin and so on). But these laws are applied very flexibly; fasting and prayer also come within this disciplinary element. Monasticism is a part of it.

8. Pastoral authority within this corpus of three-fold tradition is exercised by the Bishop-in-Council, ie. with the assistance of presbyters, deacons, and lay people.

9. Matters affecting more than one diocese have to be dealt with by a Council. The Council or Synod is, at least in principle, representative of the whole Church – bishops, presbyters, and people; only the Bishop signs the decrees. A Council cannot alter the living Tradition or the faith of the Church. There are other bodies and structures, constitutions, rules of procedure, accounting procedures etc., all of which come under the rubric of checks and balances to promote proper use and prevent mis-use of authority.

Some questions to be discussed.

In a discussion between Lutherans and Orthodox such as in our case now, we could raise some questions which need further clarification and detailed study.

1. The relation between Scripture, Tradition, Community and the Holy Spirit needs a great deal more elaboration than I have so far seen done. The Orthodox would say that Tradition is the Life and Mind of the Holy Spirit in the Community of Faith; therefore that Tradition created the Scriptures, maintains it and interprets it. We feel that the continuity of this tradition is an important element in the development of the mind of the Church—it is not proper to jump from Scripture to Augustine to Luther and then to deal with Reformation thinkers alone.

To be in the Tradition means to be in a community that has both historical and spiritual continuity with the Apostolic community, with the Faith of our Fathers, and with the Church Catholic. It is possible to have historical continuity and to lose spiritual continuity; it is even possible to have some spiritual continuity without historical continuity; but usually the two are inter-dependent. I am not sure that Lutherans and Orthodox would be completely in agreement at this point.

2. The Authority of a Creed or a Confession. Lutherans and Orthodox, I presume, would agree in general on the normative authority of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol. They may even agree in principle that this symbol has a higher normative value than later or other confessions produced in the course of the history of the Church. But in actual practice, Lutheranism seems to the Orthodox to be putting more weight on 16th and 17th century confessions and disputing about what appears to us rather peripheral issues like the affirmation of the Authority of the Bible in terms which are far from consistent or true to fact, or the interpretation of the doctrine of justification by faith (e. g. whether righteousness is only imputed or actual), while neglecting the noble doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Community of faith. To us it seems that the sixteenth century confessions do not do justice to these fundamental doctrines of the Church, and can mislead the Church into avenues of futile and sterile Church debate. For this reason the Orthodox do not regard the sixteenth century confessions, whether Lutheran, Reformed or Tridentine of such significance as to engage our care and attention or to call for detailed study.

For us in the Orthodox Tradition the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol remains the one unalterable dogmatic formulation to which we have to be loyal as Christians. Anything produced before or after that has value only in so far as it elucidates, illuminates and confirms what is stated or implied in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol. Even the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon (we Oriental Orthodox reject this Council as a heretical Council) have value only in so far as it can correctly interpret what is implied in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol.

3. The Orthodox believe that the Apostles established a particular pattern of authority in the Churches they established and this pattern has to be basically conserved in the life of the Church wherever they went, whether in Jerusalem or Antioch or Rome or Athens, each local Church was placed under the care of a college of presbyters with a presiding elder (*Presbyteros episcopos*), with a body of deacons and deaconesses to assist them. This pattern was never static, but its basic contours were given by the Apostles themselves and are not therefore *adiaphoron* to us.

It must be made clear that we are not speaking of a tactile succession from one bishop to his successor. In fact the Canons expressly forbid a bishop having any decisive say as to who his successor shall be; it should always be the Church that elects and consecrates one of its members to the episcopate. One bishop does not handover either the faith or the episcopal Charisma and authority to his successor. There is no such "episcopal relay race" along the generations implied in the authentically Orthodox understanding of Apostolic Succession. The bishop gets his faith (in the sense of understanding appropriation of the teaching of the Church) not from the bishops who consecrate him, but from the Church, i. e. from his father and mother and friends and associates and congregation and his parish priest. The notion of Apostolic succession—*diadoche apostolon* meant originally simply lists of successive bishops in each local Church which constituted a mark of the continuity of the local Church from Apostolic times to the contemporary period. The list does not mean that it was through these bishops that the Apostolic faith or authority was transmitted. The faith and the authority were transmitted in the course of the whole history of the local Church, and not merely through a local succession of bishops.

But the important point to be made is that the Apostles established a basic pattern for authority or governance in the Church which

- (a) was basically collegiate or conciliar;
 - (b) was based on the leadership of a community of elders with a presiding elder or bishop and a group of deacons and deaconesses;
 - (c) made provision for the participation of bishops, presbyters, deacons as well as lay people in making conciliar decisions and decrees, though only the bishops of local churches affixed their signatures to the documents;
- and (d) was extensible to include a whole region or province (a provincial Synod with a presiding Metropolitan), but was never extended to form one single, all-embracing universal structure such as was later conceived and sought to be enforced in the western Church.

The discussion whether episcopacy belongs to the *esse* or *bene esse* of the Church does not interest the Orthodox. For us the episcopate and the eucharist are constitutive of the Church, but we do not talk about *esse* and *bene esse*. The thief on the right hand was given access to paradise without either baptism or eucharist or episcopate—that does not however prove that baptism and eucharist and episcopate are not essential for the life of the Church. For us these are marks of the Apostolic and Catholic Church, because it is the pattern of Apostolic institution and Catholic (general) practice.

4. I believe that the Orthodox have a different evaluation of the authority of the teachings of the ancient Church Fathers and Doctors and of the Liturgical and Canonical material that has come down to us from the early One and undivided Church.

Their authority does not stem from some official position they had in the Church which would lend some infallibility to their words. On the contrary it was the considered judgement of the Church, *post facto*, that they were reliable teachers—e.g. St. Ignatius on Eucharist and Episcopate; St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzen and St. Gregory of Nyssa on the Holy Trinity and on the doctrine of Creation; St. Athanasius, St. Cyril and St. Severus on the nature of the Incarnation. The authority of a Church Father is not intrinsic it comes from a judgement by the Church that such and such a Father's teaching is reliable on such and such a subject. This does not mean that for example St. Gregory of Nyssa who is a reliable authority on the doctrine of Creation, on evil and on anthropology, would be so also in Christology. The Church knows what is reliable Christology, and if a very revered Church Father in an earlier period wrote something about a mixture of humanity and divinity in Christ, that would have no authority for the Church. In other words, it is the Church which knows the authentic tradition which can judge the Fathers in the light of that tradition. My own tradition would for example today reject the teaching of St. Augustine in most respects, and has throughout its history refused to accept him as a Church Father. But once so recognized, the Church Father's teaching becomes authoritative in those aspects over which the Church has judged them authoritative.

5. Intrinsic Authority and Structural Authority

When the Scriptures say that Jesus taught with authority, it does not mean that he was officially authorized by the structure of Jewish leadership to be an expounder of the Law of Moses. On the contrary that was precisely the kind of authority which Jesus lacked. But it means that Jesus had the source of authority in himself in his wisdom and power and love, in his integrity and holiness, in the transparent truth of his words, in authentic ring of his personality. He said of course that all authority in heaven and on earth had been

given to him by the Father, but what the people recognized was his own intrinsic authority, the authority of his personality and wisdom.

Now that is the kind of authority that Church leaders above all should have, but seldom actually have. This does not, however, mean that the Church lives in history only by intrinsic authority. The historic realm is one where the wheat and the tares always grow together and pure intrinsic authority is so rare either in the Church or in the world. The Church in history needs also structural authority. There are authority structures in the Church and these are all supposed to be conciliar in form, but in fact turn out to be authoritarian or bureaucratic. The break-down of Conciliar authority (i. e. of *agape* in community) goes hand in hand with the rise of authoritarian (monarchical), bureaucratic (commercial), or political (semblance of democracy), patterns.

Authority in the Church has to be structured as well as charismatic or intrinsic. True goodness, holiness, love and integrity have their own authority even without being backed by structural authority. Structural authority responsibly exercised by people of intrinsic authority was the way the Apostles established authority in the Church. Not just any structure, but a structure which gives expression to love in community, a structure which gives special responsibility to a small community within a community, but does not exclude any member from exercising his or her own god-given authority as a child of God.

Confession and Eucharistic Renewal

Rev. Prof. John Meyendorff

(Fr. John Meyendorff, well-known Orthodox Theologian and Professor at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York as well as at the Dumbarton Oaks Centre for Byzantine Studies in Washington, was asked the following question: "Now that there is no longer any insistence on individual auricular confession before communion, does eucharistic communion have as much meaning as during the period when the faithful communicated only once or twice a year? We translate his reply from the original French, Courtesy S. O. P.)

It is difficult to answer in a few words to the whole set of questions posed. I shall limit myself to a few fundamental points.

1. The practice and discipline of Confession and Communion should always, and essentially, be linked with the fact that the mystery of the Eucharist is not a mere pious ritual, or an "obligation," or an individual devotional act; it is rather a common action of the whole Church (the very word *liturgy* means 'common action') which transforms human society, or the whole corpus of human beings, in the "Church of God." The problem therefore is not to recommend or advise against "frequent" communion, but rather to take seriously the words which the celebrant priest pronounces in presenting the Cup to the people, to the whole people: "With the fear of God, with faith and love, come near." This appeal (in the Byzantine liturgy) addressed to all, presupposes that all the Orthodox Christians gathered together for the eucharistic liturgy constitute one single family of God, one single temple of the Lord, one single Body of Christ. Of course, they can refuse the invitation; but this refusal means that they are excluded; they exclude themselves from the fraternity of the Church of God.

2. There are several reasons why, for the last two centuries (not more) the lay people take communion not more than once or twice a year. One of the more obvious reasons was that, generally speaking, it was felt that whatever concerned the Church was of interest only to the clergy, while the laity came only as spectators, and, of course, to pay the bills. If then today we find a renewal of Eucharistic communion practically everywhere in the Orthodox world, including the Middle East, the USSR., and happily, also the U. S. A., it is because the Orthodox believers have become aware of the fact that in a world more and more secularized and indifferent,

even hostile, to religion, the Church cannot survive unless she becomes, clergy and laity together, united in the community of the Body of Christ and fully responsible for the mission entrusted by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples. God be praised! One can and should continue to live a respectable and decent life; but the first concern should be the salvation and life eternal of human souls; everything else in sham and pharisaism.

3. Throughout the centuries when "normal" lay people were "normal" Christians who had no sense of participation or personal responsibility, the Church had worked out different ways of heeding the warning of St. Paul: "whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty against the body and blood of the Lord. So let everyone examine himself, and only thus eat of this bread and drinks of this Cup. For he who eats or drinks of it without discerning the Body of the Lord, eats and drinks his own condemnation" (1 Cor. 11: 27-29).

In Greece and other Balkan countries, one insists on fasting before communion. The lay people (but curiously enough, not the priests) have to abstain from meat, from milk products and from fish for three to seven days before communion. As for Russia, private confession used to be obligatory. But in fact, neither the Canon laws of the Church nor the liturgical books (which were composed at a time when regular and frequent communion was the norm) contain any instruction about fasting or private confession before communion. The only traditional restriction—and it is quite ancient—was regarding abstinence from all food or drink during the morning when one takes communion. It is clear that this restriction applied to all Christians, clergy and laity, and could not be transgressed except for very serious medical reasons. If of course implies that one should abstain from smoking as well.

4. One cannot receive communion if one is not deeply aware of one's own unworthiness, one's own sins, and if one does not beg for the forgiveness of the Lord. Actually, no one is really 'worthy' of this divine infinity; he who thinks he is 'worthy' is not ready to approach the Body and the Blood of our Lord. And the normal way and the more solemn means to recognize one's unworthiness is to receive the forgiveness of God is to present oneself for the sacramental mystery of Confession.

In fact, the priest, who is responsible for the administration of the sacrament, has often no way of verifying, before God, that the one to whom he administering the Eucharist is canonically worthy, all Christians are required to go to confession at regular intervals. But length of these intervals, evidently, ought to be and can be fixed in relation to the personal needs of each and according to the judgment of the Father Confessor.

It follows then that the one who takes communion only once a year should certainly go to confession before. In any case, if one accepts as norm regular and frequent participation in the Eucharist, to which communion all Orthodox Christians are invited at each liturgy, it would be highly artificial and spiritually unproductive to go to confession before every communion.

The practice of general confession is a way of underlining that one should pray and report before taking communion. But we should also be fully aware of the fact that the prayer of absolution which the Priest recites during the liturgy requires for its full effectiveness the sincere and receptive opening of the heart of the penitent to the Lord. This is the same also for private confession.

It is certainly desirable that the practice of confession and communion follows clearly established rules, so that the priest does not have to make arbitrary decisions and can follow clear pastoral instructions received from his bishop, who is the guardian of the Apostolic faith.

But we rejoice that such questions—which are the real problems of the Church—are raised seriously by so many Christians. In many parishes the Eucharist is becoming again the real centre, the true inspiration, and the sure foundation of the life of the Church.

Shadows over the Relations of Rome and Orthodoxy?

By Olivier Clement (Translated from the French)

In a letter to Cardinal Slipyj¹ dated 19th March 1979 and recently made public, Pope John Paul II appeals to all Roman Catholics, especially to Ukrainian Catholics to make dignified preparations for celebrating the millenary of Ukrainian Christianity. The text of this letter presents serious difficulties for the Orthodox in general and particularly for the Russian Orthodox Church.

It is quite clear that for the Russians, the baptism of Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev and the people of Kiev² on the Dnieper, in 988 A. D. constitutes the baptism of Russia itself. Ukraine became a distinct entity only much later. But the Pope, instead of using the term Russia, uses the expression, giving the impression that the Ukrainian Catholics are the only continuers of this entity called Rus.

The Pope, in passing, affirms that "the Christian faith came from Rome to the Rus of Kiev, passing through Constantinople": now it is quite clear also that the Orient did not need Rome to receive the Gospel and that there are numerous Apostolic sees in the Orient.

Finally, and this is perhaps the most important problem, the Pope presents the Union of Brest-Litovsk³ in 1596 as a "happy result, more than partial" of "efforts which were made to re-establish the unity of the Church". Now, for the Orthodox, the formation, mainly during the counter Reformation, of Churches of Oriental rites "united" (*uniat*) to Rome, is a testimony to the denial (on the part of Roman Catholics) of the global ecclesiality of the Orthodox Church and to the desire of the Papacy to annexe to itself entire

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1. Ukrainian Uniat Patriarch in the USSR, jailed by the Soviet Union and released through the request of the Pope directly to Soviet authorities as well as through the Russian Orthodox Church.
 2. Kieve was the Capital of Russia before it moved to Moscow up north.
 3. Union concluded between the Ruthenian and the Roman Catholic Churches, with the approval of Pope Clement VIII and king Sigismund III of Poland. This was how some of the Orthodox Ukrainians under the Metropolitan of Kiev and many Poles joined the Roman Catholic Church. The Russian Government opposed this union as did also the Poles.

provinces, through a veritable phenomenon of ecclesiastical colonialism. The constitution of these churches "united" to Rome equally among the Habsburgs as in Poland-Lithuania, did not happen without heavy pressure from these Governments. The maintenance in these uniat communities of a Byzantine rite divorced from its proper theological and ecclesiological context witnesses, if not to a certain contempt for, at least to a grand ignorance of the organic character of Orthodox existence. If John Paul II were to conceive the re-gathering of Christians under the perspective of the Union of Brest-Litovsk, he would take the risk of compromising all that Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras have achieved towards a better of mutual understanding between Catholics and Orthodox.

It remains true that the violent liquidation of Oriental rite churches united to Rome, on the morrow of the second world war, in the countries of Eastern Europe, and particularly in Western Europe, and particularly in western Ukraine after its annexation by the USSR, constitutes a scandal in reverse no less regrettable. John Paul II has justification on his part for invoking the principle of religious liberty in this regard. But it is to be desired that the uniat Churches in Eastern Europe become bridges rather than stakes in the relation between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, as it is already the case for certain uniat churches in the Arab world—churches whose representatives at Vatican II have known how to make the authentic voice of the Christian Orient heard in the West.

News and views

Armenian Martyrs Remembered in Lebanon

Beirut (EPS) – A “positive neutrality” is how the Very Rev. Aram Keshishian, the acting primate of the Armenian Church in Lebanon, described the “pan-Armenian” position being held by the three Armenian communities (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant) in Lebanon.

In a special message, read in all Armenian Churches in Lebanon on Sunday, 21 October, on the occasion of requiem services in memory of Armenian martyrs of recent clashes, Bishop Keshishian said that the community believed that such “a political approach was the only way to re-establish a lasting peace in the country, stop the bloodshed and guarantee the communal co-existence, unity and territorial sovereignty of the country”.

The Armenian community in Beirut has been caught in clashes in the past few months and the Bishop in his address referred to the “martyrs, who in their early youth fell to protect our basic human dignity and community rights”.

He went on: “We shall continue to follow the direction we have chosen. As in the last four years, also today we have the courage and readiness to face death with life, destruction with reconstruction, hatred with reconciliation. We shall continue to struggle for justice and peace and for the co-existence of all the communities in a united Lebanon. No one can deviate us from this stand. And we believe strongly that our strength lies primarily in our unity”.

Central Committee Member Warren Quanbeck Dies

St. Paul, Minn. USA (EPS) – Dr. Warren A. Quanbeck, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Luther Theological Seminary at St. Paul, Minn., USA, and a member of the WCC's Central Committee, died on 11th November, at St. Paul. He was 62 and had been under treatment for cancer.

Dr. Philip Potter, general secretary of the WCC, in a message to Dr. Lloyd Svensbyk of the Lutheran Northwestern Theological Seminaries, said: “We give thanks to God for his courageous faith and his loyalty in thinking, writing, teaching and living to Christ as Saviour”, adding: “the ecumenical movement greatly benefitted from his contribution to the articulation and confession of faith for today

out of his rich Lutheran tradition and he is warmly remembered for his pertinent participation as a delegate to the WCC Fifth Assembly and as a member of the Central Committee".

Dr. Quanbeck served also on the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Theology and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Foundation for Inter-Confessional Research. He was one of three official LWF delegate-observers at the third session of the Second Vatican Council.

British Churches Back Progressive Disengagement Policy on South Africa

London (EPS) – The policy of progressive disengagement by Britain from the South African economy has been endorsed by the Assembly of the British Council of Churches (BCC), holding its biennial meeting in London from 19 to 21 November, as the appropriate basic approach for the churches to adopt on this question.

The key section of the resolution, passed with only six or seven votes against out of a total of over 80, read as follows: "In view of the deepening crisis in South Africa, and the undesirability of aiding and abetting the apartheid system, the assembly declares its conviction that progressive disengagement from the economy of South Africa is now the appropriate basic approach for the churches to adopt, until such time as it is clear that all the people of South Africa are to be permanently entitled to share equally in the exercise of political power in regard to the whole of the country".

The debate took place against a background of awareness expressed by some speakers that change in South Africa was inevitable and the question was whether it was still possible for this change to be peaceful, as they as Christians should strive for it to be.

Miss Christian Howard, one of the Church of England representatives, wondered whether the Afrikaner ruling elite would put political change in motion sufficiently fast to forestall the growing pressure among blacks for violent change because they felt that was the only way they would get any where. The major pressure for change would, she thought, be from the blacks inside the country and from neighbouring black states.

Miss Heather Walton, the Student Christian Movement representative, who had just returned from spending a year studying theology and apartheid in South Africa and who described herself as "possibly the only person here who has lived in a black township", said she felt the South African government was now relaxing its attitude because the strategy of grand apartheid was working and so there was no longer the need to enforce petty apartheid. The recent changes it had announced or was contemplating were not because of the pressure they had been putting on it from outside but because of its own strength.

Opposition to the approach eventually adopted was forcefully expressed by Conservative M. P. Michael Latham, one of the Church of England representatives. He wondered whether they in the BCC Assembly were really representative of the people in the pews and questioned whether Britain had any obvious responsibility to bring about political change in South Africa.

The government's view was that civil trade should be determined by commercial considerations, not by the character of the regime concerned. The proposed call for progressive disengagement he described as intellectually specious: it was "gesture politics" and did not work. Moreover, while our share of the South African market had remained static, West Germany's, France's and Japan's had been rising.

Mr. Latham further argued that the blacks in South Africa would suffer under a policy of disengagement, unless West Germany, France and Japan took Britain's place, "in which case disengagement is simply a futile gesture". Moreover, was it worth putting British workers out of work?

But the Assembly was not persuaded by these arguments. Most of which were answered in detail by subsequent speakers.

The Assembly also heard, in a document read from by Canon Paul Oestreicher (Church of England), from someone who, though apparently well-known to them, could not be named because he was a banned person in South Africa.

He had said that the changes the nationalist government was making there in response to pressures were not fundamental. All they were doing was buying some of the blacks off by including them in the central core.

Nor, argued Canon Oestreicher's anonymous correspondent, should British church-people be put off by the fear that outside pressure would lead to a retreat into the laager by the South African ruling elite. "You are dealing with a bunch of hard-headed capitalists," he said. "Pressure which threatens the profitability of the laager will induce change."

Another speaker, the Rev. Brian Brown, a South African Methodist who was formerly on the staff of the now banned Christian Institute of South Africa and is now working in Britain, said the most fundamental change in South Africa this past year was the establishment of yet another black homeland, Vendaland, which meant that another half million people had been disinherited of their rights of citizenship in the land of their birth. "Grand apartheid is more rigidly implemented at the end of 1979 than at its beginning," he said.

On Monday (19 November) the Assembly unanimously voted in as the BCC's new General Secretary, to serve for seven years from 1 September 1980, the Rev. Philip Morgan, aged 49, who has been General Secretary since 1967 of the Churches of Christ, a denomination linked with the Disciples of Christ in the USA.

14 Students in new Mission Training Centre.

For the first time, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of India has started a Mission Training Centre at Mavelikkara and the first batch of 14 students are already admitted. They will be taught for two years at the centre and one year in between the field for practical training. The second batch will be admitted in June 1980. A three storeyed building has been constructed, for which the Westphalion Evangelical Church of Germany has given a substantial gift. In addition to two full time staff members, there are part time teachers from the Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam and from the neighbouring dioceses. Students are paid full scholarship and pocket money. During training they will be deputed to various institutions in the Church for practical training as well. The students are given basic theological training as also training in health and hygiene, in agricultural and industrial development and in various practical skills including language training.

Demise of the Arch Bishop Athenagorus of Thyateria

Arch Bishop Athenagorus of Thyateria and Great Britain died on the 9th September. He was born in Patmos in 1912 and had his basic education in his native land and in Cyprus. He had his theological studies at the Theological School of Chalki, ordained deacon in 1934. He worked for some years at the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and then went to the United States to continue his theological and philosophical studies. He was ordained priest in 1940 and received the new name Athenagorus. During his priesthood he served the Greek arch diocese of America as the editor of *the Orthodox Observer*. He was also Professor at the Orthodox Theological Institute of Pampbret in Connecticut as well as at the Pedagogical academy of New York. He was consecrated Bishop of 1959 and promulgated Metropolitan in 1961. He was the auxiliary Bishop of the Greek Arch diocese in America and later he was in charge of the Greek Communities in Canada. Since 1963 he was archbishop of Thyateria and Great Britain. During this time he did remarkable work as pastor and writer. The archbishop was well known in the ecumenic circles, member of the Central Committee of the W. C. C. from 1968-76, he was also the President of the Inter-Orthodox Commission for dialogue with the Anglican Church.

Election of a new Primate for the Anglican Church

The Reverend Robert Runcie has been announced to be the successor of Donald Coggan as the Primate of the Anglican Church. The new Primate, the one hundred and second in the line of the archbishops of Canterbury, is known in academic circles as the dean of the Trinity Hall of Cambridge and director of the Cuddesdon College Oxford. Since 1970 he was the bishop of the St. Albans and had actively participated in the dialogue with the Orthodox Churches as the President of the Anglican Commission for the preparation of this dialogue. The ecumenical leanings of archbishop Runcie is well known. "The Church of England", said the new Primate is part of the one Holy and Catholic Church. But no longer the Anglicans can try to solve their problems without taking account of their relationship with the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox and other Christians.

A Great Tree Has Fallen

The Passing Away of Fr. Florovsky.

The entire Orthodox world has suffered an immense loss in the passing away of undoubtedly the doyen of Orthodox theologians - the Very Revd. Fr. Georges Florovsky this summer.

This was truly a giant among theologians, a teacher of teachers, an Orthodox theologian who was a peer of the very best that the west has produced in recent times.

Fr. Georges carried aloft the beacon of Orthodoxy at Princeton and Harvard, and to the very end was a fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton.

All of us Orthodox are deeply in his debt, and there is none today who can take his place. His major writings have only just recently begun to appear in English. Let us hope that the translations from the original Russian will continue to appear, and that all will have access to the wisdom and erudition of this great Teacher of Orthodoxy, true Christian, humble servant of God. May God grant rest to his soul!

Book Review

Mar Osthathios, *Theology of a Classless Society*, London, Lutterworth Press; 1979. 159 pp.

An impassioned plea for justice in Society from an Orthodox bishop, written in a trenchant and lucid style, is always something of a rarity. And when that demand for an egalitarian society is directly traced to an understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the book becomes doubly interesting. If an Orthodox bishop's plea is also fully ecumenical, asking for a Trinitarian unity of "Catholic substance, Protestant principle and Orthodox Ethos", the welcome or such a book can be hearty and enthusiastic.

f The author recognizes that there are inherent difficulties in using the Holy Trinity as a model for the ideal society. He seeks heroically to face these difficulties in a special appendix called "Your Queries Answered". We see here an ebullient optimism, and an almost naive trust in the goodness of humanity. "Love and concern must become our second nature, to be expressed to all of humanity". Some sectors of that humanity especially the Marxists, would feel that the Bishop's professed love for them has not led to a deep understanding of what they believe or what they stand for.

The second appendix seeks to justify the use of the Doctrine of the Trinity as a standard for society. The bishop's main point seems to be the vision of the Holy Trinity as "a nuclear family". No doubt many Orthodox theologians would raise their eye-brows at such an outrageous analogy. But the Bishop bases his analogy on nothing less than the fifth theological oration of St. Gregory the Theologian, who it is claimed, used the analogy of Adam, Eve and Seth to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The passage from St. Gregory cited by the Bishop has no intention of suggesting an analogy for the Holy Trinity. The only point that St. Gregory seems to make in this passage is that though Eve and Seth have both their origin in Adam, that origination is of two kinds – Eve having been taken out of Adam's rib and Seth out of his loins, Eve *proceeding*, so to speak, from Adam by a process other than that by which Seth is *begotten* from Adam. Adam is Creature; Eve is fragment of Adam; Seth is begotten of both. This does not mean either that Creature Fragment and Begotten cannot be three separate persons, nor that they cannot share the same human substance. The conclusion of St. Gregory's words cited by the bishop shows clearly that it was far from the mind of the great Cappadocian to propose the nuclear family as an analogy for understanding the Trinity.

God is of course the model for humanity, the original for the image which is man. Bishop Osthathios does not argue that the Classless Society is the same as the Kingdom of God, or that it is attainable in history. It is rather to be pursued as an ideal. Our Lord himself in his High Priestly prayer, prayed for the unity modelled on the Trinity. Perhaps it is time for us to see more clearly that the life of the Trinity has some standard-setting relevance for a organization of society. Bishop Osthathios' book passionately beckons us that way.

THE STAR OF THE EAST

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